



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

perbole. It deals in picturesque, imaginative expressions. Its inherent vice, therefore, is a tendency to exaggeration. The kindred languages of the Peninsula, unlike those of the rest of Western Europe, are impressed with an air of Arabian pomp, and an Asiatic magnificence of idiom pervades their whole structure. Hence, when we peruse the proclamations and addresses of their public men in poor translations, bald without truth and literal without exactness, we do extreme injustice to their authors by recurring for an object of comparison, to the majestic simplicity of our best models of style in similar compositions. And, owing to the neglect of this caution, much unmerited obloquy has been cast upon the reputation of Bolivar: We, moreover, who enjoy the comparatively phlegmatic temperament congenial to the colder zones, should consider the excited feelings of the ardent inhabitants of the South, where

‘Souls made of fire and children of the sun’

will naturally communicate the stamp of their glowing sentiments to the impassioned language they speak.

ART. VI.—1. *The Principles of Political Economy, with a Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Science.* By J. R. McCULLOCH. Edinburgh. 1825.

2. *An Essay on the Circumstances which determine the Rate of Wages and the Condition of the Laboring Class.* By J. R. McCULLOCH. Edinburgh. 1826.

MR McCULLOCH seems to be at present one of the most active laborers in the vineyard of political economy; and if the value of work be estimated by the quantity of it turned out in a given time, he must certainly be considered as belonging to the productive class. Beside the two treatises named above, he has published, within a few years, a formal essay on the rise and progress of his favorite science, and is now, we believe, preparing for the press a Dictionary of Political Economy and a new edition of the ‘Wealth of Nations,’ with extensive commentaries by himself; having in the mean time contributed largely to the weekly and quarterly journals, and delivered a course of public lectures at London. Mr McCulloch therefore

not only advises people to work, but sets them the example ; and affords a remarkable instance of that ‘ noble φιλοπονία ’ which he yet, somewhat inconsistently, and, as we think, erroneously, denies to be natural to man. It is also but just to him to add, as we shall have occasion to question some of his opinions, that his labors have been crowned in the mother country with a good degree of success. His name is often mentioned with approbation in the most respectable literary journals, and his opinion has been appealed to by the committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the state of Ireland, as a high authority on economical subjects. His writings are also not unknown on this side of the Atlantic. Some of them have been republished at New York, and we believe made the text book of a course of lectures delivered by one of the professors at the college in that city. Such being the estimation in which our author is held by the public, we have thought it our duty, as we have the misfortune to differ from him in some particulars, to submit the views we entertain upon these points to the consideration of our readers, who will decide in their wisdom upon the weight of our objections and the merits of the case.

In doing this, however, we wish to be understood as entertaining a high respect for the talents and labors of Mr M'Culloch, although we are not satisfied with all the theories that appear in his works. He is evidently a person of intelligence, industry, and the best intentions ; and it is a proof of no inconsiderable talent to be able to attract the attention of the British public as much as he has done by dissertations on a subject, in itself rather abstract than popular. But while we render full justice to his real merits, we are bound to add, that we do not recognise in his writings any distinct traces of original thought. As far as we are acquainted with the state of the science, and with his labors for the advancement of it, we can only regard him as an expounder of doctrines previously proposed by others. The basis of his work is the ‘ *Wealth of Nations*, ’ which he often quotes verbatim for several pages in succession, and of which he borrows at other times the language and illustrations as well as the principles. He also adopts with little or no modification the theories of Malthus on population and rent, of Say on production, and of Ricardo on profits ; giving, as in the case of Smith, full credit to their respective authors, and employing at times to a considerable extent, their

own words. We do not undertake to say, that he has added absolutely nothing of his own in the way of illustration or explanation of the opinions of his masters ; but the new suggestions, which he offers, are not, as far as we have noticed them, of a kind to affect leading principles, or to alter, in any important point, the state of the science. His work must therefore be viewed, merely as an abridgment or summary of the doctrines now taught in what has sometimes been called the *New School of Political Economy*. He originally prepared it for publication in the Supplement of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' where the substance of it appeared under the title of *Political Economy*. It has since been reprinted separately and in its present enlarged form. The tract on *Wages* is little more than an extract from the principal work of such passages as relate to that subject. The Dictionary, and the new edition of Adam Smith, have not yet reached us. The discourse on the Rise and Progress of the science is a fuller developement of the introductory chapter of the work before us, which may therefore be viewed as a complete exposition of the author's opinions.

The only merit, which can well belong to a compiler, is that of stating clearly and correctly the facts and principles which he undertakes to republish ; and to this Mr M'Culloch is, we think, in general fairly entitled. He receives the theories of the respective writers from whom he copies in the manner in which they were understood by them ; and recapitulates them in a correct and perspicuous style. If there be any fault in his manner, it is an occasional slight air of dogmatism, which is perhaps most remarkable in the passages that treat of doubtful points, where it is of course least becoming. But this error, if real, is not unnatural. When a writer has full confidence in the strength of his argument, he permits it to speak for itself ; and it is in general when he feels himself pressed, that he is tempted to eke out his logic by round assertions. There is in various parts of the work what appears to us great looseness of reasoning ; but for this Mr M'Culloch is not in general responsible, as he borrows for the most part the arguments and illustrations, as well as the doctrines of his masters. In the few instances in which he draws conclusions himself from the premises stated by them, his method is not, however, in our opinion much more satisfactory. Before we proceed to examine the leading principles of the system, we shall select one or two

passages of this latter class as specimens of the power of thinking that belongs to the author.

It is a fundamental tenet in the doctrines of this new school, that the wages paid to a laborer are naturally the smallest sum which will enable him to support himself, and a family large enough to keep the supply of labor already in the market at the same point. If, as these gentlemen learnedly argue, he were to bring up more children than are necessary for this purpose, the number of laborers would increase, the market would be overstocked with labor, and the price of the article, that is, *wages*, would fall. If, on the contrary, he were to bring up fewer children, the number of laborers would diminish, the market for labor would be understocked, and wages would rise. Hence by a perpetual oscillation between these two extremes, wages are maintained on an average at the point where they are just sufficient to support the laborer and his wife, and to bring into market another laborer and another laborer's wife, to take in due time the places of the former. Such is the theory on this subject. We shall endeavor to show hereafter, that, although sanctioned by the high authority of Adam Smith, it is radically erroneous. But assuming it for the present as true, let us see how far it tallies with other parts of our author's system.

The above explanation of the rate of wages being admitted, the question of course arises, in ~~what~~ manner the laborer and his family are to be supported. They can receive as wages just as much as is necessary for their maintenance, and no more. But it will evidently make a great difference in their expenses, whether they live on turkey stuffed with truffles and Champaign wine, or on rice and molasses; whether like the English peasantry they feed on beef, bread, and beer, or like the Irish on potatoes and buttermilk. In the first case their provisions might cost them ten dollars a day, and in the last perhaps not as many cents. Which, therefore, of these, or any other possible modes of subsistence, is to regulate the rate of the laborer's wages? The answer of Mr M'Culloch is, that the mode in which the laboring classes live, is determined by the custom of the country. If it be the custom, as in England, for them to live on bread, beef, and beer, each individual will naturally conform to it, and his employers will be obliged to give him wages enough to enable him to do so. If, on the contrary, the custom of the country authorize, as in Ireland,

buttermilk and potatoes, each individual will be obliged to follow it, and will not be able to obtain from his employer wages enough to procure anything better.

Admitting this part of the theory to be also correct, it is evidently of great importance, as is justly argued by our author, to encourage the laborer to live as well as possible ; to eat bread and beef rather than potatoes, and to drink beer or wine, or, we may add, cider, rather than water, since it is only by keeping up the custom of living well that wages can be kept up so high as to furnish the means of good living. If the standard of wages falls, it falls never to rise again, and the laborer's comfort falls with it. The general exhortation, therefore, given by these philosophers to the industrious classes is, 'Live as well as you can ; eat, drink, and wear the best you can get ; you cannot possibly receive more wages than will defray your expenses according to the mode of living, to which you are accustomed ; if you accustom yourselves to live well, your wages will enable you to live well ; if you accustom yourselves to live meanly, you will get no more than the amount required for living meanly ; therefore, once more, by all means live well.' 'With all my heart,' would probably be the reply of the honest laborer, who has generally sense enough to prefer a beef steak to a boiled potatoe, if he can get one as cheap as the other. But what follows ? We turn over a few pages, and our liberal philosopher of the new school sings another tune. We come now upon the old story of retrenchment and economy. 'Friendly societies are excellent things ; saving banks are still better ; therefore by all means lay aside a part of your wages, and put it into the saving banks, or the fund of the friendly society, that you may have a little hoard against old age and infirmity.' This again sounds well, and agrees sufficiently with the wisdom of ages, and the dictates of plain common sense. But how does it agree with what goes before, and with the wisdom of the new school ? Wages are always by necessity, according to this theory, just at the point, where they furnish the means of living according to the custom of the country. If the laborer wish to economize a part of his wages, in order to put them into the saving bank, he can only do it by living below the customary standard. This may have its advantages, but how will he contrive to live below the common standard and above it at the same time ? He cannot both have his cake and eat it. If he spend his wages he cannot

put them in the bank ; if he put them in the bank he cannot live well, and will have no wages either to spend or spare. What consistency is there in advising him in the same breath, first to consume his wages, and then to hoard them ? But this latter counsel is not only inconsistent with the theory of these gentlemen, but on their principles cannot possibly be executed. If the laborer economize he must fare worse ; and this advice being general, if the laborers in general conform to it, they all fare worse ; and the standard of living falls. Wages (still reasoning on this system) fall with it ; and the laborer in consequence of his economy now receives only just enough to enable him to defray the expense of his reduced mode of living. How then can he accumulate or make deposits ? If his wages be high, he can by living meanly diminish them, but all his economy can do no more. It cannot possibly put a dollar into his chest, or into that of the saving bank. If he have imprudently reduced himself from bread and beef to potatoes, in order to lay up some provision for his old age, he will obtain no reward for his foresight but the satisfaction of living on potatoes all the rest of his life, without securing the provision he wanted ; for no sooner has he brought himself and his wages down to the potatoe standard, than he loses the power of economizing at all, his earnings being now barely sufficient to support life. Economy, as well as charity, is therefore a word that has no place in this reformed vocabulary of moral science. Its authors, when they advise the laborer to hoard his wages, not only advise him to do precisely what they have just before advised him not to do, but what they have also proved to him to their own satisfaction, that no man in his situation possibly can do. Such advice we consider both inconsistent and unreasonable.

On the system of the new school, the whole class of laborers may be regarded figuratively as clinging to the sides of a rocky precipice, overhanging the bottomless gulf of starvation. Into this their children above a certain number, by the kind laws of an overruling Providence, regularly fall. The rest with their parents sustain themselves painfully upon two or three projecting ledges, of which the upper ones correspond with a bread and beef diet, and the lower with a potatoe one. If a laborer habitually occupy *bread and beef*, and be accidentally pushed off, he alights on potatoes and avoids the gulf. If he habitually occupy *potatoes*, and meet with the same accident.

there is no salvation for him, and he goes to the bottom for ever. Such is the doctrine of these gentlemen, and in consequence of it their first and very natural advice to the laborer to adhere firmly to *bread and beef*. With what appearance of consistency or humanity, then, can they afterwards turn round upon him, and exhort him to descend from *bread and beef* (without which he cannot possibly even attempt to economize), and take a permanent post on *potatoes*? If Mr M'Culloch can furnish us with a satisfactory reply to this query, we shall cheerfully give him credit for more ingenuity than he has exhibited in any passage of his works, with which we are acquainted.

The liberal exhortation to live well and spend all his wages, which is addressed to the laborer by Mr M'Culloch in the first instance, is, as we have said, naturally dictated by his theory on the subject of wages. The system furnishes, however, an additional motive of a different kind for giving this advice ; and if we look a little more nearly into the matter, we shall perhaps be able to account for, though not to reconcile, the inconsistency alluded to above. Mr M'Culloch exhorts the laborer to live well, evidently for the purpose of preventing him from marrying, and having carried this point, he then exhorts him to live poorly, and economize, in order to prevent him from becoming a burden upon the community, when disabled by old age or accident. Marriage and the poor laws are, as is well known, the two great bugbears of the new economical school. Our ancestors, simple souls, thought it a vastly fine thing to promote marriage ; but like the man in Molière who had reformed the position of the great vital organs, *Nous avons changé tout cela*. Our readers are not so ignorant as to require to be told, that it is considered at present the great object of political economy to bring about a state of things, in which there shall be the fewest possible marriages, and to each marriage the fewest possible children. Since the publication of the work of Mr Malthus, the sages and statesmen of the mother country are continually beset with the apprehension of being eaten out of house and home by a hungry population, which, as they say, is pressing hard everywhere against the limits of the means of subsistence. In vain you tell them that there is no appearance that the earth, or any part of it, is, or ever was, or will be overpeopled ; that if we cast a glance over the surface of the globe, from Kamtschatka westerly till we come back again to

the other side of Behring's straits, we find nothing but immense tracts of uncultivated land, with the exception of some half dozen small spots, which are precisely those where provisions are most abundant ; that the population of the earth is not greater than it was two or three thousand years ago, and will probably not be greater two or three thousand years hence than it is now. All this gives them no satisfaction, and they still insist, that the earth, and every part of it, always has been, is, and always will be, by a necessary result of the laws of Nature, encumbered with an excess of inhabitants ; and that every new marriage, and every birth occasioned by such marriage, has the effect of making bad worse. Under the influence of these terrors, they are constantly exerting their eloquence to discourage people from marrying. To the higher classes they hold out the prospects of easier circumstances, greater consideration, and a more rapid progress in the career of professional or political advancement, which they say, are among the advantages of celibacy. They quote with approbation the opinion of a gallant Scotch general, who in his youth abandoned his mistress to go to the wars and acquire military glory ;

‘ Ambition, I said, would soon cure me of love ;’

and they remember to forget to add the recantation in the same song ;

‘ Ah ! what had my youth with ambition to do ?
Why left I Aminta ? why broke I my vow ?’

To the laboring classes, who have no pretensions to political advancement or military glory, they offer the solid attractions of a heartier and more substantial diet. When the Hercules of humble life is to make his choice, they paint to him vice and poverty in the form of a young wife and a dish of potatoes, while virtue and success are depicted under the seducing image of celibacy, and a smoking beef steak properly garnished with bread and porter. ‘ Beware what you do,’ they say ; ‘ the moment is critical. If you marry young, you will inevitably have more children than you will be able to maintain, your wages will not support you as you have been accustomed to live, and you will be compelled to drag out a miserable existence on poor potatoe diet ; while if you will consent to live single, you may revel all your life on beef and beer.’ Thus placed, like the long eared animal, between his two bundles of

hay, our laborer, we will suppose, in a hungry moment decides for celibacy, bids adieu to fair eyes and tempting looks, and fixes his gaze resolutely on the air drawn vision of the steak. But now comes the hardest part of the case. No sooner has the disinterested and liberal monitor carried this point, than the scene shifts at once. He flourishes his pen, more potent than the wand of the famous Dr Snatchaway, sometime court physician of the island of Barataria, and lo! the pretty young wife disappears—the steak goes off in its own smoke—and our prudent laborer, recovering from his day dreams, finds himself clinging as before to the fatal precipice, with a lonely potatoe before him, and the gulf of starvation yawning under his feet. After exercising every species of moral restraint and prudence—after sacrificing his future spouse to a mess of pottage, and then the mess of pottage to the hopes of a provision for old age or accident, he sees himself fixed precisely in the worst position in which he could ever have been placed, without exercising any prudence at all—no provision for old age—no food for life but potatoes—and not even the satisfaction of eating these in company. ‘Poor moralist!’ as we may well address him with the poet,

‘Poor moralist! and what art thou?

A solitary fly!

Thy joys no glittering female meets,
Thou hast no hive of hoarded sweets,

No painted plumage to display;

On hasty wings thy youth is flown,
Thy sun is set—thy spring is gone.’

Now we say, that to reduce a poor man to this situation, under pretence of teaching him how to better his condition, is not dealing fairly with him, and that ‘*Frolic while ’t is May,*’ is the only philosophy consistent with the doctrines of the new school. We shall see hereafter that the whole theory is without foundation, and that an honest, industrious, and temperate laborer (bating accidents, which may happen to great as well as small) may always earn enough not only to support his family in a comfortable manner, but to lay aside a hoard against old age. But be that as it may, the strange inconsistency of advising a man to live single in order that he may live well, and then exhorting him to economize out of his wages—which on this theory must necessarily force him to live meanly, without enabling him to lay up anything after all—is sufficiently obvious. Such

reasoning, we repeat, appears to us extremely loose, and we cannot but notice it as a specimen of that defect in the work of Mr M'Culloch.

A strong aversion to the poor laws is, as we have already intimated, another favorite tenet with the writers of this new economical school. A public provision for the disabled members of society has no other effect, they say, than to create the very wretchedness, which it afterwards imperfectly relieves, without in any way diminishing the amount which would otherwise exist. Private charity is less mischievous, because it operates less systematically and extensively, but in principle and as far as it goes it is no better. Therefore steel your heart, and shut your hands. Let the poor laws be repealed without delay, and let it be understood, that the supposed right of the indigent or distressed to relief, either public or private, is wholly inadmissible. Such doctrines, like the antimatrimonial system which we have just been considering, are so completely abhorrent from all common notions and common feelings—from the text and spirit of Scripture—the traditions of the fathers, and the universal consent and practice of all nations and ages, that we hardly know in what manner to treat them.

One is tempted to think, that the writers who support these monstrous paradoxes cannot be really serious, and that they are imposing upon the public a sort of *melancholy humbug*. At all events, their language addressed to a civilized and christian community carries its own refutation with it. When we are told, that we are no longer to perform the duties of charity, public and private, because of this or that discovery in political economy, we may well answer, without examining at all the value of the supposed *new lights*, that our own hearts (to say nothing of Scripture) furnish us with stronger evidence of the reality of these duties, than we can possibly have of the truth of any metaphysical theory. If then the new system be at variance with our strongest natural sentiments, and the conduct they prescribe, it follows not that these sentiments are of injurious tendency, and this conduct immoral, but that the system is false, were it even impossible to detect the least logical flaw in the argument. This, however, is so far from being the case here, that the argument in support of this theory is as singularly flimsy, as the theory itself is unnatural and inhuman.

But waving this point for the present, let us advert for a moment to the manner in which this view of the operation of

the poor laws coincides with the urgent advice given to the laborer to invest a part of his wages in saving banks and friendly societies. If the new school system were true, the laborer, as we have seen, could not possibly follow this advice, and the consequences, if he could, would be directly ruinous to him by reducing his wages in exact proportion to his economy. But supposing the reverse, we could venture to inquire of Mr M'Culloch why the operation of friendly societies and saving banks should be a whit more favorable, than that of the poor laws? Are they not all so many different modes of relieving the distressed out of a common fund provided for the purpose? Are not friendly societies communities instituted for the express object of making public provision for the poor? Is not the general community, of which we are all members, a great friendly society, established for the very same among other ends, and *bound* (notwithstanding the contrary opinion of Mr Malthus, Mr M'Culloch, and the rest of the new lights), *bound* in duty to provide for its poor, as much as to defend the common territory from foreign violence, or to administer justice between man and man? How then, we repeat, can the operation of things substantially the same be essentially different?

It may be said, that admitting the principles to be the same in both cases, they are carried into effect on a very different scale, and that their results may on that account vary considerably. This no doubt is true; but why are we to suppose without proof that all the variation will be in favor of the friendly societies and against the poor laws? The latter, it is said, may be badly digested, or badly executed. What then? Are all the friendly societies and saving banks perfect systems and perfectly administered? Mr M'Culloch himself assures us, on the contrary, that there are great defects, theoretical and practical, in the best of them. Is it probable, in fact, that every little knot of laborers, who may associate for such a purpose, will exercise more wisdom than the government of the country? In general not, it may be answered—but under corrupt political systems, like many of those that now exist in Europe, it may be safer for a few families, who know and can trust each other, to confide wholly in their own foresight, rather than place any dependence on a heartless and purseproud aristocracy. Let us grant all this—which is going as far as the stoutest whig or radical in England (and the philos-

ophers of the new school belong mostly to one or the other of these parties) need to desire. Grant that the poor laws must be badly administered, because the government is corrupt and bad. What follows? Not that we are to supersede the action of the government by establishing a thousand little *imperia in imperio* to do its work, but that the government itself requires to be reformed. Instead of wasting labor, time, and money, in doing yourselves what you have already paid the government to do for you—if the machine be really incapable of going through its functions, set to work manfully and repair it where it needs alteration. When this shall have been done, the poor laws and every other part of the system will of course be properly executed. To attempt to remedy the evil by private associations is in no degree more reasonable, than it would be to provide in the same manner for the security of the highways, or the defence of the country. Remark, too, the singularly heavy burdens, which these private associations impose upon the laboring classes. The latter have already contributed their share to the common fund of the state, out of which they have a *right* (*pace Malthusii*) to be relieved in their distresses. They are now called upon to make a second contribution out of their moderate earnings (which, on the principles of the new school, can never be more than just enough to support them) for the same purpose. Their situation is therefore in this respect the same with that of the English Dissenters and Catholics, who pay tithes to the established Church, and maintain their own clergy besides. When the laborers depend, on the other hand, on the poor laws for relief in their distresses, they are in fact relieved, as they ought to be, by the rich. They pay, it is true, their proportion of the public taxes; but these taxes fall principally upon the wealthier classes, while the poorer, which furnish exclusively the subjects that require aid, contribute almost nothing to the fund that affords it. This is precisely as it should be; while, on the other hand, the plan of taxing the poor exclusively for this purpose, as is done by the friendly societies, is unjust, and that of taxing them doubly, as is done by the union of the two systems, is doubly so.

We make these remarks for the purpose of pointing out the glaring inconsistency between the opinions of Mr M'Culloch on the merits of the two systems. If his theory be true, the poor laws are no doubt mischievous, but on the same principles, friendly societies are equally and doubly so. For our-

selves we have no hostility to these societies, and no objection to see them introduced into the United States, although we believe them to be unnecessary under a good government and a judicious and well administered code of poor laws. According to our view of the general condition of the laboring classes, neither poor laws nor friendly societies tend in any considerable degree, either to encourage population or depress wages. The operation of both we consider favorable, and we believe that they may very properly and usefully come in aid of each other. On the theory of the new school, they both tend directly to reduce the wages and of course the comforts of the laborer, without producing in either case the least countervailing advantage. In order to be consistent, these writers should denounce both alike; and we cannot but notice the different manner in which they treat the two, as another specimen of a singularly loose way of reasoning, even admitting the premises on which they wish to proceed.

The tone of apparent indifference, if not actual self satisfaction, with which these gentlemen announce their supposed discoveries, which, if real, would be fatal to all the hopes and prospects of society, and which shock, at first blush, every sentiment of natural humanity, is truly painful. We believe them to be perfectly sincere; and entertain no doubt that they consider the promulgation of their theories as a service to the public. In decrying matrimony and charity they suppose themselves to be tearing off the mask from a pair of beautiful syrens, who would decoy us to our ruin. We respect their intentions, their characters, and their talents; for it proves talent rather than the want of it to invent and sustain an ingenious paradox, however unsubstantial. We will even go further, and admit, without hesitation, our belief, that if such gentlemen as Mr Malthus, Mr M'Culloch, Mr Brougham, and others, who hold these opinions, and who have shown themselves on many occasions the enlightened and generous benefactors of their country and the world, were called upon to *act* in the interest of the laboring classes, even in regard to these particular subjects, they would prove their hearts to be surer guides respecting them than their heads. With all this, or rather partly in consequence of this, we cannot read without pain such a paragraph as the following, from the pen of Mr Ricardo.

‘The progress of knowledge manifested upon this subject [Wages and the Poor Laws] in the House of Commons since 1796,

has *happily* not been small, as may be seen by contrasting the late report of the committee on the poor laws, and the following sentiments of Mr Pitt in that year.

“ Let us,” said he, “ make relief in cases where there are a number of children a matter of right and honor, instead of a ground of opprobrium and contempt. This will make a large family a blessing and not a curse ; and this will draw a proper line of distinction between those who are able to provide for themselves by their labor, and those who, after having enriched their country with a number of children, have a claim upon its assistance.” *

In plain English, what is the amount of the first of the two preceding paragraphs ? The House of Commons have *happily* discovered, since 1796, that the poor, of whom there will be always more or less in every society, must inevitably perish without relief, and that there is no possibility of giving them any real aid, either by public or private charity. Now is this discovery, supposing it to be real, a *happy* one ? Is it a thing to thank God upon ? Is it not rather, as the poet Campbell says of the imaginary discoveries of the atheist, one which its author should ‘ weep to record ? ’ Would Mr Ricardo have thought it decent to say, that the House of Commons had happily discovered that the horrors of the slave trade were irremediable,—that the late famine in Ireland was beyond the reach of any human palliation,—that the present distress of the British manufacturers is incurable except by death ? In these cases, as in the one in question, the discovery (always supposing it real) might have the effect of preventing a waste of labor upon injudicious projects of charity, and might thus far be a positive advantage ; but to call it *happy* would be thought something worse than mockery. How much more noble, humane, and instinctively just is the language of Mr Pitt, quoted as above by Mr Ricardo in terms of reprobation ! We cannot agree with this illustrious statesman in believing, as he appears to have done, that a family of children would naturally among the poorer classes, bring with it a necessity of recurring to the charity of the public ; but we heartily approve the tone of thought and feeling displayed in his remarks. We cannot but repeat, that the continual opposition to the dictates of common sense and humanity, into which the partisans of the new economical school are led by their peculiar doctrines, is, in our

* Ricardo's Political Economy, p. 103, note.

opinion, independently of any other objection, a conclusive refutation of the whole theory.

It is time, however, to leave these preliminary points, and proceed to those which it is our present principal object to consider. We have dwelt longer on the preceding topics than we should otherwise have done, because, while they show the inaccuracy of the reasoning of these writers on their own suppositions, they also serve to throw light upon the leading questions with which they are intimately connected, and which we now propose to examine in the cursory manner which suits the compass of an article like this.

The great problem in Political Economy, as is justly observed by Ricardo in the Introduction to his work, is to discover the manner in which the wealth of a community naturally distributes itself among its members. And supposing the latter, economically viewed, to consist of the three great classes of *landholders*, *capitalists*, and *laborers*, (a distinction, which, however, is rather formal than substantial, but which may be assumed without occasioning error for the present purpose,) the problem takes the more distinct shape of an inquiry into the amount of the shares, that respectively fall to each of these classes, out of the products resulting immediately from the labor of the last. The immense importance of this inquiry is sufficiently obvious; for according to the different answers which may be given to it, the whole science of Political Economy, and with it that of government in general, which is closely connected with the former, assume a different aspect. If the laborers, that is the mass of the people, can never, in any country, or by any possibility, enjoy any considerable portion of the fruits of their industry, but are condemned by the standing laws of nature to work incessantly for the profit of others, and can only reserve for themselves the scantiest pittance that will maintain them, and a part of their children,—if this be in fact the case, why then we say that the laborers, that is, the mass of the people, are always and everywhere necessarily abject and wretched, and that it is idle to look for the cause of their degradation in political abuses or private vice.

Such is the doctrine of the writers of the new school, who have thus denounced against their fellow men a doom more dreadful than the 'eldest primal curse,' inflicted on us through our frail first parents in Paradise. *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread*, were the terms of the latter; *In the*

sweat of thy face shall OTHERS eat bread, is the import of the modern philosophy, which thus cancels the beneficial clause of this great covenant, and leaves the onerous condition in full force. The sweat stands as before on the laborer's brow, but the bread that was to be the fruit of it, is not to be found. *Οἰζυται*, as Cicero says of a certain sum of money in one of his pleadings. It is taken from the mouth of the laborer and his children, and thrown to the wealthy or their dogs. No matter how industrious, temperate, and active may be the man himself; no matter how just, mild, and powerful the government that protects him, it is so ordained by the fixed decrees of Providence, that, do what he can, work as hard as he may, he can never receive anything more than a bare subsistence for himself, and a limited number of children; the rest, if he happen to have more, being foredoomed from the beginning to inevitable destruction, and himself and family condemned to share the same fate, if they are touched by the slightest breath of mischance.

Why, then, if all this be true, talk of political reform or improvement? What means the name of *Whig*, which is claimed as an honor by most of these philosophers, if the mass of men, under all forms of government and modes of administration, are equally bondmen, and *Helots* to a few favored taskmasters? What matter is it whether the two classes are called *capitalists* and *laborers*, or tyrants and tyrants' slaves? All substantial melioration of the state of the people is on this supposition impossible (the pretended palliative of *moral restraint* being, as we have seen above, a mere mockery), and a difference of names is not worth contending for. Such in fact appear to be the conclusions of these writers, and the only difficulty is to understand why, with such opinions, they should attach themselves to a political party, whose professed object is the improvement of the constitution, and whose watchword is *liberty*. If, however, we suppose, on the contrary, that the laborer, by the regular operation of the principles that determine the distribution of wealth, receives a fair and equitable portion of his own products, or rather (the terms being properly explained) the *whole*, it will follow, that wherever the mass of the people are debased and wretched, it is owing either to accidental misfortune or their own fault, and that the evil is of a nature to admit of palliation to an indefinite extent, if not of complete remedy. The problem in question is therefore undoubtedly the most important and interesting, not only in political econo-

my, but in the whole extent of the science of government, and is one that must be solved in a satisfactory manner, before we can even enter upon the study of politics with a prospect of advantage. However general may be the prejudice at present (among the few persons who examine these questions in the abstract) in favor of the strange and desolating paradoxes of the new school, we think it not very difficult to show within a short compass, and by arguments drawn from their own writings, the radical error of the system.

The basis of it is the theory of *Wages*, which we have just been considering, and which supposes that the actual laborer can never receive anything more than the smallest pittance which will serve for his support. For a full refutation of this doctrine, we need not look beyond one of the first principles universally admitted by these and all other writers on political economy, as a law of the science. They all agree that no economical enterprise can be carried on, unless it be sufficiently productive to support all the persons engaged in it, replace all the capital invested, and afford in addition the average rate of profit. Any branch of labor, which does not give the returns necessary for this, is overdone, and the capital employed in it is gradually withdrawn and invested in others, until the equilibrium is restored. Such is the doctrine on this subject, which is generally acknowledged, and is also, we may add, incontestably true. Now as the actual laborers are among the persons interested in all economical undertakings, it follows, of course, that they must be supported before a profit can accrue to any body, and it also follows, that they must receive their proportional share of the profit, whatever it may be, that remains, after all expenses and charges are deducted, to be divided among the interested parties. These, we say, are the natural consequences of the principle; and it is therefore a curious question, how the writers of the new school have been able to deduce from the same premises conclusions diametrically opposite. The wonder ceases when we find that they treat the whole class of laborers as an exception from the general laws regulating the distribution of wealth, which they lay down as applicable to society at large. Now it is evidently making a very large allowance to suppose, that a hundred families out of every thousand are landholders or capitalists, the other nine hundred being laborers. But taking this for granted, we have here a general rule, which, when applied to practice, is, by

acknowledgment, false in nine cases for every one in which it is true. If the system be correct, it is evident that the rule must be laid down the other way; that the distribution of the products of labor must be represented as naturally unequal, and the cases of the landholders and capitalists (who are supposed among themselves to share equally) viewed as exceptions.

But waving this point, which is merely formal, let us examine the grounds upon which these writers establish their supposed exception against the laborers. Unless this point can be rigorously proved, the general rule applies to these as well as to all other persons, and they stand on precisely the same footing with the landholders and the capitalists. The doctrine in regard to this subject, which has since been developed and insisted on by subsequent writers, was stated originally by Adam Smith in his great work on the *Wealth of Nations*. It is one of the few weak points in that noble performance, but, by a singular sort of fatality, it has of late attracted more attention and approbation than almost any other, and has been made the basis of a pretended reform in the science of *Political Economy*. Smith himself does not seem to have viewed the principle as a very important one, and at any rate has not sustained it with his usual care and success. We owe it, however, to his high and well deserved authority to consider in detail the arguments by which he defends his theory. These are contained in his chapter on the wages of labor.*

He begins with stating that the natural wages of labor are its products, that before the land is appropriated and capital accumulated, the whole amount of them belongs to the laborer; but that afterwards a great deduction takes place, because the landholder and the capitalist come in for a share. These facts are substantially true; but it does not follow from them by any means, that the laborer is a loser in consequence of the appropriation of the land and the accumulation of capital; nor is it quite correct in form to represent the laborer as giving up a share of the products of his labor to the landholder and capitalist. The three persons bearing these characters are partners in a common enterprise; and each receives a share of the products corresponding with the amount of his interest in the joint concern. If the laborer, while he employs the land

* *Wealth of Nations*, b. I. ch. viii.

and capital of others, were to retain himself the whole product of his work, it would be at the expense of the capitalist and landholder, who would in that case suffer a gross and palpable injustice. While the several interested parties divide fairly the profits of the common concern, each may be said with propriety, as was intimated above, to receive the *whole* product of his *own* labor; nor would the expression be improper as respects the landholder and capitalist, since capital and land, economically viewed, are merely the representatives of labor, which forms the source and substance of all the wealth of nations. The condition of the laborer, instead of being made worse, is greatly improved by this state of things, because the productiveness of labor is much increased by the introduction of machinery, and the accumulation of capital. He receives, as before, the whole product of his labor, and this product is greater than it would have been had he worked alone instead of entering into partnership with the landholder and the capitalist. To say that a mere laborer is not so well off as he would be, if he were at once landholder, laborer, and capitalist, is as much as to say, that if one man could cultivate the whole earth, and consume all its fruits, he would be as rich and as happy as the whole present human race put together. On this view of the subject, therefore, to which he nevertheless attaches the principal importance, Dr Smith is evidently mistaken. His other arguments in proof of the same proposition are as follows.

‘The actual wages of labor,’ he continues, ‘thus reduced by the deduction of rent and the profits on capital, are determined by the contract made between the capitalist and the workmen; *and this contract is naturally always to the disadvantage of the latter.*’

Why? The masters, it seems, enjoy greater facilities for combination, and can hold out longer in the dispute about wages with the laborers than the latter.

‘A landholder, a farmer, a master manufacturer, or a merchant, though they did not employ a single workman, could generally live a year or two upon the stocks which they have already acquired. Many workmen could not subsist a week; few could subsist a month, and scarce one a year, without employment. In the long run the workman may be as necessary to his master as his master is to him, but the necessity is not so immediate.’

If this reasoning were found in any other work than the ‘Wealth of Nations,’ we should take the liberty of calling it

extremely feeble. In the first place, the supposition of facts is evidently erroneous. In a struggle between the capitalist and his workmen, it is clear, that the latter have every advantage. If they can barely contrive to subsist, whether on their previous savings, the bounty of friends and kindred, or chance jobs for the day, the week, or the month, during which the dispute lasts, they then start afresh with their whole capital (that is their personal strength and skill) unimpaired; and pursue their course as prosperously as if nothing had happened. If the capitalist, on the contrary, suspend his operations for a single day, he is, according to the present modes of transacting business, ruined for life. It is he, in reality, who is placed where our new lights would fain station the laborer, on the brink of a precipice; and the gulf of bankruptcy is open for ever under his feet. A ship, we will suppose, arrives from India with a rich cargo which is sold immediately by auction, and produces a large sum of money. Can the owner now come to his laborers, and tell them that he has just received as much money as he wishes to expend upon himself and his family for ten years to come,—that for that length of time he can do without them,—and that if they will not consent to take half their former wages, he will discharge them all at once? We all know the contrary. If he has received a hundred thousand dollars, he has probably notes due for two hundred thousand; for such is about the usual proportion between the real and fictitious property of our capitalists. He must, then, before he has time to think of his workmen, hurry from bank to bank, pay a note here, renew another with large deductions of interest there, and proceed in this way until, by judiciously applying perhaps fifty out of his hundred thousand dollars, he finds himself for the moment tolerably secure. Now at least he can come to his workmen with a bold face, and fifty thousand dollars in his pocket. Not at all. His ability to repeat the same operation ninety days hence depends upon his continuing his usual enterprises upon the same, and if possible, an extended scale. He has still not a moment to lose. After finishing with the banks, he must next repair to the wharf, superintend the equipment of another vessel, ship for India every dollar of his last fifty thousand that he can possibly spare from his personal expenses, and as many more as he can contrive to borrow, in order to receive as soon as may be another cargo; and instead of being at liberty to hold an independent language with his workmen,

it is for his interest to double their wages, rather than lose their services for a single moment.

We mention this state of things not as being absolutely necessary (for we know that it is possible for a man to trade within his real capital), but as what our intelligent readers will recognise as the actual and ordinary one. On this ground only we think the case is pretty well made out against Smith; but the real strength of the argument does not lie here. The average rate of wages, and of profits, does not depend at all upon the advantages that may be gained by either party in the accidental disputes between particular workmen and particular capitalists. The regulating principle, as Smith himself affirms, is that of demand and supply, which fixes the average value of labor, as of every other article. The occasional variations from this standard, that occur in particular contracts, are like the oscillations of a pendulum, which must always settle after a short time in its proper perpendicular direction. The wages of labor are determined for the time being by a comparison of the whole amount of labor in the market with the whole amount of the capital applicable to the purchase of it; and this being the case, it is obvious that competition and combination can have no effect in raising or depressing the average price. This is also the doctrine of Mr M'Culloch. *The rate of wages must depend on the proportion which the whole capital bears to the whole amount of the laboring population.** The second position taken by Smith, in defence of the proposition we are considering, is therefore even less tenable if possible, than the former; and it is really singular, that it should have been satisfactory to his own judgment.

After giving these reasons for his opinion, that the wages of labor are necessarily the smallest sum upon which the laborer can possibly subsist, Dr Smith proceeds to remark, that wages regularly rise when a community is advancing in wealth, and fall when it is declining. This is natural enough; and it would seem to be equally natural, that when a community is in this respect in a stationary state, wages would be stationary also. But this we are told is not the case.

'The hands would naturally multiply beyond the employment. There would be a constant scarcity of employment, and the laborers would be obliged to bid against one another in order to get it.

* Essay on Wages, p. 113.

If in such a country the wages of labor had ever been more than sufficient to maintain the laborer, and to enable him to bring up a family, the competition of the laborers and the interests of the masters would soon reduce them to the lowest rate which is consistent with common humanity.'

Here at least we have the appearance of an argument, although it is not to our minds a convincing one. If it be true, that the laborers naturally multiply in the long run, as Dr Smith has it, beyond the demand for labor, it certainly follows, that the market for this article will be constantly overstocked, and the price of it regularly depressed below its natural level. Such, as Smith asserts, is in fact the case; but he enters into no developement of the proposition, and brings nothing at all in proof of it, excepting a few loose observations on the situation of China. He does not, in truth, appear to attach much importance to the observation, but seems to have considered the strength of his argument on this subject as lying in the remarks we have considered above, respecting the effect of competition, and the deductions made from the gross products of labor by the landholder and the capitalist. The authority of Smith can therefore hardly be alleged with propriety, in favor of the doctrine that population naturally multiplies beyond the supply of employment, which he seems to have thrown out without much reflection as a sort of *obiter dictum*. The remark has since been taken up, illustrated, and as some think demonstrated by subsequent writers; and now forms the basis of the science of Political Economy, as understood and taught in the new school. Our readers will recognise in it the germ of the theory of Malthus on population, which it will therefore be necessary for us to examine, in order to ascertain the real principles that regulate the rate of wages.

The doctrine of Mr M'Culloch resolves itself into the same proposition, which we last quoted from Smith. He begins by stating, as above, that the rate of wages must depend upon the proportion between the whole capital and the whole amount of the laboring population. He then very naturally concludes, that if capital increase in proportion to population, wages will rise, and the reverse; and after making some inquiries into the principles, that determine, respectively, the increase of capital and that of population, he finally lays it down, on the authority of Malthus, as a fundamental law of nature, that population has a constant tendency to increase beyond the increase of capital,

that is, in the last result, of the means of subsistence. Mr M'Culloch is himself so fully satisfied of the truth of this principle, that he adopts it from the work of Malthus without even thinking it necessary to copy the reasoning in support of it. It is therefore needless to consider the particular form, in which the theory appears in his book; and in the few observations that we shall make upon it, we shall view it as presented by its author.

Mr Malthus is in fact the only person who has yet entered into a formal argument in support of this proposition. Before the publication of his work, it had been hinted at by various writers (as for example Dr Smith, in the passage quoted above), but they were generally not aware of its importance (if true) to the welfare of the world, and gave it but a small share of attention. Subsequent writers, who have adopted the theory of Malthus, have also in general, like Mr M'Culloch, depended wholly upon his reasoning in support of it, so that his book still remains the only manual of this new faith. It may appear presumptuous to think of replying in a few pages to an essay which occupies two thick octavos; but in this, as in other cases, the essential points lie within a small compass, and we shall now attempt to indicate them in a brief, but we hope satisfactory manner.

The work of Malthus was originally prepared as an answer to the visionary scheme of absolute perfectibility, which obtained a temporary vogue at the close of the last century. Condorcet, Godwin, and a number of other writers, undertook to maintain that all the evil we suffer is the effect of bad government, and that if the public affairs could once be properly conducted, vice and misery in all their fearful forms, including disease and death among the number, would disappear entirely, and that we should flourish forever in immortal youth, upon the face of the earth, without of course having any occasion to wish or hope for a better state hereafter. This extravagant system, which has lately been revived by Mr Owen, hardly requires a serious answer. If it did, there would be no difficulty in producing a hundred different ones, metaphysical and physical, each stronger than the rest, and all decisive. Among the number of these possible answers is the one, which appears to have formed the groundwork of the theory of Malthus, namely, that if disease and death, or, in his phraseology, vice and misery did not mow down one after another the generations

of men as they successively come up, the earth would pretty soon be overpeopled, and its inhabitants in want of the means of subsistence. This obvious fact furnishes a complete refutation of the system of absolute perfectibility, and although the partisans of that doctrine have made some awkward attempts to evade its force, they have failed entirely, as may well be supposed, of refuting it.

This principle, we say, appears to have been the germ of the theory of Malthus, but as brought out by him it wears a different and far less satisfactory form. After showing that population, if not checked by disease and death, *would* overpeople the earth, and produce a general famine, he goes further, and affirms that population, checked as it is by disease and death, *actually does* overpeople the earth and produce a general famine. These two propositions, which Mr Malthus strangely enough appears throughout his work to confound with each other, and to consider as in a manner identical, are obviously quite distinct, and very nearly contradictory. The former may be regarded as self evident; the latter, supposing it to be true, is at first sight paradoxical and contrary to common sense and feeling. Before it can be granted, it must therefore be rigorously proved. The single argument advanced by Malthus in support of it, when divested of the mathematical garb in which he has chosen to dress it up, is the following. Population has a tendency or capacity to increase very rapidly; the means of subsistence have a tendency or capacity to increase very slowly; therefore population actually outruns the means of subsistence, and by its excess produces everywhere distress and famine.

Now we are bold to say, that for an argument which has obtained a pretty extensive currency among enlightened men, this is as questionable a piece of logic as can well be found in the annals of sophistry. The form of the argument is in fact completely vicious, and if the leading propositions were both proved, the conclusion that is drawn from them would not be a whit the more probable. The premises are, that population has a capacity to increase very rapidly, and the means of subsistence a capacity to increase only very slowly. Now it does not require all the syllogistic science of the Stagyrte to see, that from possible premises nothing can be inferred but a possible conclusion. If it be possible for population to increase more rapidly than food, why then it is of course possible that men may be reduced to a state of famine. If we wish to know

whether they actually are or are not reduced to this state, we must inquire how fast they actually have increased, or are increasing, in proportion to the supply of food, and not how fast they possibly may or might. In the argument of Malthus a *possible* deficiency of food is made to produce an *actual* famine. A community in which the inhabitants do not increase at all, and are even diminishing in number, is supposed to be starved by the possibility of doubling its population, under other circumstances, once in twentyfive years. This is very much as if we should say, that Peter keeps a coach and six, and servants in proportion, upon the proceeds of a prize, that he may possibly draw in the next lottery; or that John entertained a select company of friends at dinner last Tuesday upon some larks, that he may possibly catch when the sky shall fall. Such reasoning reminds one of the middle science of the schoolmen, and would perhaps be better treated in the manner of Martinus Scriblerus than by fair and serious argument.

The only conclusion that really follows from the famous comparison of ratios, which forms the basis of the theory of Malthus, is, as we have observed above, that a deficiency of food is physically possible; a thing well known to all, and of no practical importance. It is true that this writer, whose reasoning is throughout extremely wanting in precision, often shifts his ground, and instead of his first assertion, that population has a physical capacity to increase very rapidly, substitutes the entirely different one, that population actually does increase very rapidly, excepting when it is checked by want of food. This new principle, if true, would doubtless establish his conclusion; but so far is it from being proved, that Mr Malthus has hardly laid it down for the first time, when he again withdraws it or qualifies it in such a way that it leads to nothing. After stating in his first chapter, that 'population *when unchecked*, goes on doubling itself every twentyfive years,' and farther in the same paragraph, that 'population, *could it be supplied with food*, would go on with unexhausted vigor,' he declares five or six pages later, that population does not proceed with unexhausted vigor, but that want of food is never the immediate check to its increase, except in the rare case of actual famine, and that the real immediate checks are diseases or vices resulting from scarcity, and *various other causes, moral and physical, entirely independent of the supply of food*. He thus contradicts his new fundamental proposition at the moment of

stating it; and afterwards proceeds to illustrate, by an infinity of examples drawn from a general survey of the different parts of the globe, the nature of these moral and physical checks to the increase of population, and the manner and extent of their action. Having in this way proved to his own complete satisfaction, and that of the reader, that population is nowhere checked by the want of food, and that it still does not increase in general with any great rapidity, and having thus completely refuted his own leading propositions, he very coolly and quietly without the least attempt to explain the contradiction, returns again to these propositions at the close of his first volume, repeats that population proceeds with unexhausted vigor, when not checked by want of food, and draws his agreeable conclusion of the necessary existence of a permanent and universal famine.

The real source of the erroneous reasoning of this writer, if probed to the bottom, would perhaps be found to lie in a disposition to consider all the moral and physical evils, to which we are subject, as indirect results of scarcity. If this were granted, it would follow, that there are no checks to the increase of population, except the consequences direct and indirect of this cause, and the conclusions of Malthus would in fact be true. This position is, however, quite untenable, and Mr Malthus, who is perfectly honest through the whole of his work, is occasionally led by the course of his reflections to feel that it is so, and in such cases readily admits for the moment, as in the passage above quoted, that there are various moral and physical checks to the increase of population, *wholly independent of the supply of food*. After candidly making these concessions he soon, however, appears to forget them, and returns to a course of argument which supposes the opposite opinion.

But whatever may have been the source of his mistake, it appears that the original premises which are employed in his argument, and which may safely be admitted, lead to nothing; while those which he occasionally substitutes for them, and which if proved, would establish his conclusions, are not only not proved, but are amply refuted by himself. His conclusions are, therefore, wholly groundless, and there is, of course, no reason for supposing, as is done by Mr M'Culloch and the other writers of the new school, upon the authority of his system, that the laboring classes naturally multiply in all countries beyond the means of subsistence. We might, then, with perfect safety,

rest the case here ; but as the principle we are considering is of great moment, the most important, as we have said before, in the whole compass of political science, it may be agreeable to our readers to see it established in a positive as well as in a negative way. Having demonstrated the error of the doctrine, which assumes, in substance, that *the increase of population has a natural tendency to produce a scarcity of the means of subsistence at the time and place of its occurrence*, we shall now proceed to show the truth of the directly opposite principle, namely *that the increase of population has a natural tendency to produce a comparative abundance of the means of subsistence at the time and place of its occurrence*. If this can be made out, it will follow that the theory of the new school is not merely erroneous, but directly the reverse of the truth, and that its partisans have mistaken for a source of evil what is in fact a real and permanent principle of national good.

In order to ascertain with precision the effect of an increase of population upon the supply of the means of subsistence, let us suppose it to take place in a territory with which we are familiar, as for example the District of Columbia. The ten miles square comprehended within this district are capable of producing only a limited quantity of provisions, while the population is capable of increasing to an indefinite extent. Let us suppose for argument's sake, that the territory is already so fully peopled, that all its products are completely forestalled, that the last grain of corn, which can possibly be raised from the last inch of ground by the utmost stretch of agricultural science, is regularly grown, baked, and eaten by the actual population, and that the increase is nevertheless proceeding with the same untiring march as before. A new family presents itself ; what, under these circumstances, will be the conduct of the person charged with procuring the supplies ? Will he feel in his conscience, that he has come to the great banquet of nature without invitation ? that there is no place reserved for him, and that he must necessarily starve ? Will he, out of complaisance to Malthus, abstain from the use of imported grain or flour, and die of inanition, rather than consume a bushel of wheat, that was not grown within the District ? We are bold to say, that, without so much as dreaming of any of the grand discoveries of the new economical school, he would simply put on his hat and walk across the street to the next flour merchant's, to order a barrel of flour, which, as the pro-

ducts of the District are by the supposition forestalled, must of course have been imported. But what in this (on the new system) somewhat critical and alarming emergency is the deportment of the flour merchant? An attempt is here made to induce him to aid and abet an open violation of the standing laws that regulate the distribution of wealth. Will he not see through it, and resist it with a manly firmness? Will he not exact from the applicant for flour a sight of his invitation to the banquet of nature? Upon his failure to produce it, will he not unfold to him the doctrine of the two ratios, convince him of the necessary disproportion between the number of empty stomachs and that of the loaves that are to fill them, and exhort him to starve with resignation and cheerfulness for the honor of political economy, and the greater glory of Mr Malthus?

Such, perhaps, would be the course which we should naturally expect, at least upon the system of the new school; but in point of fact nothing of all this happens. The flour merchant, or his shopman, welcomes our supernumerary with perfect civility, takes his orders, delivers him the barrel of flour, receives his money, books the transaction, wishes him a good morning, and turns away quietly to serve the next customer. But how long could this system be pursued? Would not a frequent repetition of similar applications exhaust at last the worthy merchant's patience or his flour? Suppose, for instance, a new family to present itself under the above mentioned circumstances every day for a year in succession (giving an annual increase of about two thousand inhabitants for the District, which we presume is pretty near the truth), would they all obtain their supplies as readily as the first? Would not the exasperated dealer in grain, worn out and baited in this way with ceaseless demands upon his constantly diminishing stock, at last take the bit between his teeth, and resolutely refuse to part with another barrel for love or money? This might be reasonably expected on the theory of the new school; but here again the reasonable expectations of these gentlemen are completely disappointed. The arrival of each new customer, instead of irritating the flour merchant, seems by some extraordinary accident to sweeten his humor, and give him a finer flow of spirits. He smiles upon each still more graciously than on the preceding one, and as the number increases, his very countenance and person seem to expand with it. He fattens on the flour which he sells to others, more than on what

he ate before himself. His brow, which was hitherto somewhat cloudy and contracted from a lurking doubt, whether he should be able to sustain himself at the stand which he had chosen, grows smooth and glossy ; and the little man bustles about among his people with the gaiety of a cricket. Strange as it may seem, his stock of flour, instead of being diminished by this continual drain, increases like the contents of the widow's cruise in Scripture at every deduction. His warehouse itself enlarges ; a neat dwellinghouse rises by the side of it, and his little patch of a backyard dilates into a decent garden, with a stable at the bottom. Untaught in political economy, and bewitched with the sparkling eyes of some one of his pretty young neighbors, the man marries. Here again his doom would appear to be sealed ; but by the effect of his singular good fortune, and the constant affluence of new customers, he contrives to weather even this last and fatal rock. His family increases ; but as his profits increase still faster, he keeps his head above water, and even comes at last to be regarded as a thrifty man. His wife and daughters give balls, and sport their merinos, his son (too probably) a tandem ; and the father, if he be not ruined by the extravagance of his children, emerges at last into public notice as a successful merchant and wealthy capitalist, figures as a bank director, and finally closes his useful career by filling successively the responsible offices of Common Council man, Alderman, and Mayor of the city of Washington.

To state the same facts in fewer words, the supply of grain in the District increases in exact proportion to the increased demand, created by an increase of population ; and we submit it to our intelligent readers to decide, whether a barrel of flour would ever be wanting there as long as there was a five dollar bill (or whatever the market price may be) to offer for it, although the whole territory were as thickly covered with dwelling houses as the sides of Broadway, or the Ward of Cheap in London. What is true of the District of Columbia is equally so of the ten square miles adjoining it, and so on to the Pacific Ocean. While the process we have described is going on in the District, a similar one, we will suppose, is proceeding at Baltimore, at Philadelphia, at New York, at Boston. What follows ? Has the opening of this line of great markets along our coast produced, as it ought to have done on the theory of Malthus, a scarcity of provisions, or of anything else ?

Do we hear that any citizen of any of these flourishing capitals has been compelled to request his neighbor, as a great favor, to sell him a barrel of flour at a famine price? The smallest merchant's clerk in Broadway, or State street, would smile at such a fancy, which has yet bewildered the brains of all the European professors of Political Economy. We all know that the increase of population on the seaboard, instead of producing any scarcity, has not only covered that part of the country with abundance, but exercised the most beneficial influence on the welfare of the whole interior. The growth of New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, has scattered wealth and plenty through the Genesee country, and made the wilderness beyond the Ohio and Mississippi to blossom like a rose. It dug the CLINTON CANAL.* It will open a road through the Rocky Mountains. It would drain the interminable marshes, that form the interior of New Holland, and convert the last acre of them into a wheat field, before a bushel of grain would be wanted in the United States by any citizen, who had the money to pay for it at a fair market price.

These considerations are completely decisive against the theory of the new school, which supposes that it is the effect of an increased population to produce an actual deficiency in the supply of provisions. They are not, however, quite sufficient for the purpose we have in view, which, as the reader will recollect, is to establish the proposition that an increase of population, instead of creating a scarcity, produces, on the contrary, a comparative abundance of the means of subsistence, at the time and place of its occurrence. We have already shown, that the *supply* of provisions under these circumstances is just as ample as it was before, and that it increases in exact proportion to the increased demand. It only remains to inquire in what manner the *price* of provisions is affected by the same causes. Although there may be no deficiency in the quantity of provisions, if their real value rise in consequence of an

* We have little doubt that the state of New York will sooner or later do Mr Clinton the justice and itself the honor of conferring his name on the magnificent work for which we are all so much indebted to him. No individual, perhaps, ever rendered a greater service of an economical kind to any country, than he has done to ours by effecting this canal, which, considered merely in its political results, as a new bond of union between the different sections of the republic, would place its author in the first rank of public benefactors.

increase of population, the result will be equivalent to a virtual scarcity. If, on the contrary, as we shall endeavor to show, their real value fall, the result produced is a comparative abundance. The extraordinary cheapness of grain in the province of Holland, a country that lives wholly on importation (which is mentioned by Malthus as a *curious fact*), is a pregnant indication of the nature of the conclusion, at which we shall probably arrive. It is our object, however, at present to establish the point in a theoretical way.

The price of provisions, like that of everything else, is determined by the cost of production, or the amount of labor necessary to bring them into market, and varies, of course, with the fertility of the soil upon which the supplies are raised, and the distance from which they are brought. The dearest that are required to furnish the market necessarily regulate the value of the whole. Where the population is scanty, and the state of society rude and unimproved, the price of the provisions consumed by a community depends wholly upon the quality of the soil they occupy. They are unable to profit by the superior fertility of any other, because they have nothing to give in exchange for its products. Although grain were ten times as cheap in Poland, as it is in Norway,* the Norwegians

* Norway is a favorite country with Mr Malthus. He considers the inhabitants as affording an honorable example of the practice of moral restraint, inasmuch as they seldom marry till the age of forty or fifty. Upon visiting the country he was much struck with the comfortable appearance of everything; and remarked particularly, that the farmers' boys had better calves to their legs, than any that he had seen elsewhere. It appears, however, that with all their prudence, the Norwegians do not succeed in supplying themselves regularly with a sufficiency of the ordinary kind of food, being frequently reduced, as Mr Malthus himself informs us, to mix their flour with sawdust. This was their condition when the writer of this article saw them in the year 1809.

Holland, on the contrary, is looked upon by Mr Malthus with an evil eye, the inhabitants being universally addicted to marriage. He says that it has been called the *grave of Germany*. We have had opportunity (in our personal capacity) to visit that country also, and, after residing several years in different parts of it, can say with great truth that the people could not wear a healthier appearance if they inhabited the garden of Eden. We were not led to examine particularly the lower extremities of the farmers' boys, but we have often observed with singular satisfaction the ruddy countenances of the young Dutch girls, who are all as fresh and blooming as the roses and lilies in their own flower gardens of Noordwyck and Haarlem. Mr

would nevertheless be compelled to live upon their own, and even at times to suffer from scarcity, because they have no products which they can offer to the Poles in exchange for theirs. But wherever an increase of population takes place, bringing with it, as it always does, a division of labor and a rapid progress in the arts of life, the price of provisions is regulated by the cost at which they can be raised on the best soil, anywhere under cultivation, with the addition of the charge of transportation to the place of consumption. If Norway should increase in population, and become a manufacturing country, the inhabitants would then have the means of supplying themselves with grain from Poland; and its price in their market would be the lowest at which it could be raised in the latter country, increased by the charge of transportation. Supposing this, on so bulky an article, to amount to one hundred per cent, still if the foreign grain be ten times as cheap as that of domestic growth, the price of the article would fall four hundred per cent, in consequence of the increase of population. A quantity of grain which could be raised in Norway for ten dollars and in Poland for one, the price being doubled by the charge of carriage, would now sell for two. It would therefore still be five times as cheap as the same quantity raised at home.

Malthus affirms that the number of marriages is about twice as great in proportion to the population in Holland as it is in Norway. He adds that the proportional mortality is also about double, and appears to suppose that the greater number of marriages is owing to the greater number of deaths. As the great mortality in all countries takes place among children, and as the number of children increases of course in exact proportion to the number of marriages, it is necessary that the mortality should also increase in the same proportion; and it seems more correct to reverse the order of cause and effect assumed by Malthus, and attribute the greater mortality to the greater number of marriages. If the mortality increase only in the same proportion with the number of marriages, it follows that all other circumstances are equal, and that in the present case the *grave of Germany* is precisely as healthy as the pattern country of Norway. This writer adduces some documents, which appear to prove that the actual number of births in the latter is about one quarter more than that of the deaths; and that there is of course a considerable annual increase. It is, however, highly improbable, that statements which make the number of births to a marriage greater in Norway than in Holland can be correct; because the marriages in the latter country being more frequent, are naturally earlier, and of course more instead of less fruitful. If the mortality and the number of marriages be both twice as great in Holland as in Norway, it is probable that the former country is increasing in population much faster than the latter.

A considerable part of the grain consumed in England is raised in soils that afford only ten or twelve bushels an acre, and this of course determines the price of all the rest. Now there are many soils in our country, that afford by the acre forty, fifty, and sixty bushels. In the latter case there would be an advantage of five hundred per cent to the British public in consuming our grain instead of their own, and deducting from this the charge of transportation at one hundred per cent, there would still be a net profit of four times the value of the article. This profit on the price of provisions would be the result of the increase of population, that has taken place in that country since the first occupation of the land now under tillage. The same considerations explain the cheapness of provisions in Holland, a country where, if raised on the spot, they would cost their weight in gold, and into which they could not be imported were it not for the density of the population, and the high state of improvement at which it has arrived. These circumstances have fixed the price of grain on one of the most sterile parts of the earth, at the lowest rate at which it can be raised in the most productive, increased by a small charge for transportation by water.

In general, therefore, the effect of an increase of population is to reduce the price of provisions wherever the soil is so much inferior in fertility to the best soils anywhere under cultivation, as to admit of the importation of grain from the latter. This reduction might be, as we have seen in the cases of Holland and England, a very considerable one; and as the average quantity of the different soils under cultivation, in different parts of the globe, is of course much inferior to that of the best, it follows that as a general rule, the effect of an increase of population is to reduce the price of provisions at the time and place of its occurrence. This reasoning supposes a perfect freedom of the trade in grain. If a nation chooses to limit its consumption to the quantity of grain, that can be raised on a limited territory abroad or at home, its population will be limited of course to the number of persons, which this territory will nourish; and when it has reached this point, if emigration be also prohibited, provisions will be sold at a famine price. But such artificial restraints have no connexion with the principles, which naturally regulate the distribution of wealth.

The only exception to the rule just stated is that of communities, which occupy soils of the very first quality. Grain

being with them already at a minimum price, cannot, of course, be made cheaper; and if it become necessary, on account of an increase of population, to draw supplies from abroad, the price of foreign grain, although raised also on soils of the first quality, would still be higher than that of domestic, by the amount of the expense of importing it. At this price the supply would be ample. But even in a case of this kind, the whole expense of living would still be less than it was before. The mere article of necessary food forms only a part, though a considerable one, of this expense in civilized communities. Clothing, furniture, and various articles of comfort or luxury, compose another portion not less important. Now the price of this whole class of articles is much diminished by the increase of population, and the consequent advance of manufactures and commerce; so that were the price of necessary food even to rise considerably (as it would in the particular case now supposed) by the effect of these circumstances, an equal quantity of labor would still produce a more abundant supply of the usual wants of life. Hence the effect of an increase of population is in this respect universally favorable. As a general principle, it reduces the price of necessary food, and in the few cases where this does not happen, it still reduces the total expense of living.

These principles are, we trust, sufficiently clear not to stand in need of any further illustration. If they did, it would be easy to corroborate them by one or two considerations of a very familiar, and at the same time very satisfactory kind, to which we shall now briefly allude.

1. If living were not at least as cheap in a thickly peopled territory, as it is elsewhere, it would be impossible for a dense population to exist anywhere as a permanent condition of society. If the necessary expenses of life, as compared with the reward of labor, were greater in the District of Columbia, than they are in the neighboring country, the products of an equal amount of labor would of course be less, and the profit upon it would fall below the ordinary rate. In that case capital, and population with it, would be withdrawn from the District, and invested somewhere else, until the equality was restored. The least tendency to an increasing density of population, if it were accompanied by an increase in the expense of living, would be counteracted by a stronger principle, acting in an opposite direction, and could never in fact be realized. Thus every city

on the globe affords, by the mere fact of its existence, a demonstration that the real cost of living in a dense population is at least as small as it is elsewhere. Mr Malthus denies entirely, that emigration could have any effect of this kind, and in his chapter on the subject enlarges on the dangers and hardships, that attend the settlement of new colonies in distant countries. But such considerations are foreign to the question, because the settlement of new colonies is not the sort of emigration, which would equalize, if necessary, the expenses of living in different places. If grain were dearer in the District of Columbia, than it is in the neighboring country, it would not be necessary for the inhabitants, in order to relieve themselves by emigration, to embark for New Holland or Spitzbergen. They would quietly remove to the next county, and all would be well. As this does not happen, we are certain that the evil does not exist, for which, if it did, so simple a process would afford a perfect remedy.

2. But this argument may be pushed farther, and it may be shown, that the permanent existence of a dense population upon any spot of the earth's surface shows not only, as we have seen, that the means of subsistence are at least as plenty there as elsewhere, but that they must necessarily be much more so. It is known that the annual mortality is much greater, and the chance of life much smaller in proportion to the density of population. In London, for example, the annual proportion of deaths to the whole number of the inhabitants, is as one to twenty, while in England in the average it is only as one to forty. The difference is in most cases not so great, but it is always considerable. It is necessary, therefore, to the permanent existence of a dense population on a given territory, not only that there should be no emigration from it, as there necessarily would be if living were unusually dear, but that there should be a constant *immigration* into it, equivalent to this difference of mortality; and this could not happen unless living were unusually cheap. There must be, for example, an annual immigration into London, equal to the number of native inhabitants of the city that annually reach a mature age, supposing the population of that city to increase only as fast as that of the kingdom in general.

What cause then attracts this never ebbing flood of emigrants towards London, and every other thickly peopled spot on the globe? Do they encounter the inconveniences and ex-

penses of a change of residence, for the mere satisfaction of diminishing their chance of life, without any countervailing advantage? Evidently not. If a thickly peopled territory naturally attracts labor from all quarters, it can only be because the reward of labor is greater than it is elsewhere. It is calculated that the population of Great Britain is about twelve millions, the number of annual births three millions, and of persons annually arriving at maturity one million five hundred thousand. On the same supposition the population of London being about twelve hundred thousand, the number of annual births would be three hundred thousand; but the mortality being double, the number of persons arriving at maturity would be only half as great in proportion, or seventyfive thousand. Hence an *immigration* to this amount of persons of mature age, or a proportionally larger one composed of persons of various ages, would be necessary to maintain the population at its actual height; and as it is known to be increasing much faster than that of any other part of England, the annual immigration may be rated at one hundred thousand persons of mature age, or about one fifteenth part of the whole number of persons annually coming to maturity in the country. This immense and never ceasing influx of new comers from every corner of the island, proves sufficiently the extent of the attractive force existing at the metropolis, which can be no other than the more abundant reward of labor, or, in other words, a more copious supply of the means of subsistence.*

* If we suppose two exactly equal masses of population, and that the reward of labor in one is twice as great as in the other, it will require an emigration of half the latter into the territory of the former to restore the equilibrium. Thus if the two masses be each composed of four thousand persons, and the quantity of grain to be distributed among them, as a reward for an equal amount of labor, be in one four thousand bushels, and in the other two thousand, each person will receive one bushel in the former and half a bushel in the latter; but if half the population, or two thousand persons, emigrate from the latter to the former, there will then be two thousand bushels to be divided among two thousand persons, and each will also receive a bushel. If the mortality be also double in the former, the influx from the other will exactly counterbalance it, and leave the reward of labor the same. If the former be smaller, it will require of course a smaller emigration from the other to establish an equilibrium. If the population of London be one twelfth of that of Great Britain, and the reward of labor twice as great as it is on an average throughout the island, an annual emigration of one twenty fourth part of the laborers

We have thus, satisfactorily we hope, though briefly, attempted to establish the proposition that an increase of population produces a comparative abundance of the means of subsistence, at the time and place of its occurrence. It follows of course, that the class of laborers have no tendency to multiply beyond the demand for labor; since their multiplication, to whatever extent it may go, increases instead of diminishing the demand for labor and its reward. The grounds, on which the writers of the new school endeavor to make the case of the laborer an exception from the general rules, that regulate the distribution of wealth, of course fail entirely, and with them the unnatural and antisocial doctrines, which they have pretended to establish upon this foundation.

The natural rate of wages is not the smallest pittance, that will serve to support life, but is a variable quantity determined by the productiveness of labor for the time being. Its amount is greater or less in different countries, and parts of the same country, according to the state of civilization and industry; and with particular individuals according to their personal habits. Where the state of society is such, that the people are generally industrious and temperate, an individual is able to produce in the course of the year more than he has occasion to consume. The excess of his products over his consumption constitutes his profits, and the average rate of profits is the mean of this excess in the different branches of industry. The profits thus obtained will be variously employed according to the temper and taste of the possessor. The more provident will accumulate a part of them, and the fund formed by such accumulation is what we call *capital*. It is realized in the shape of houses and furniture, machinery of all kinds, and any other objects of convenience or luxury. The exchangeable value of all these articles is determined by the productiveness of labor for the time being, and in making the exchange the capitalist and the laborer enter the market on a footing of perfect equality. In general they are partners, jointly interested in a common enterprise, of which they share the expenses and the profits, and in which each may therefore be said, with propriety, to receive the whole of his own products.

would be sufficient. The loose calculations given in the text make the actual amount equal to one fifteenth, and the conclusion would be that the reward of labor in London is more than twice as great as it is in the country, by the difference between one twentyfourth and one fifteenth.

It is pleasing to observe the effect of these principles in dissipating the frightful phantasmagoria, which the writers of the new school present us as a correct picture of the condition of the laboring classes, that is, the mass of mankind, and restoring every thing at once to its proper place and shape. The gulf of starvation, which was yawning but now under the feet of this large and meritorious portion of society, closes forever without the necessity of a previous propitiatory offering of their children to the Moloch, who alone would have presided over a creation, such as these philosophers would make of the world we inhabit. The steep and rocky precipice, upon which we left them clinging painfully for life, spreads itself out into a fair and open country, the narrow stations that afforded them a difficult and scanty footing expanded into comfortable dwellings, surrounded with trim gardens, fruitful orchards, and snug out-houses, the whole neatly fenced, and in good order. The tenant is not condemned to renounce his natural feelings, and pass his life in cheerless celibacy, nor does he find his material comforts reduced by an early marriage with a prudent and well chosen partner. The pretty young wife, therefore, whom our economical enchanters had conjured away, now reappears, but no longer brings with her the fatal dish of potatoes, which before deprived her of half her attractions. The smoking steak, with its garniture of bread and beer, no longer deceptive and unsubstantial visions, assumes a tangible form and a permanent position on the table. A troop of healthy children flourish like olive plants around and upon them; and the whole scene exhibits a charming picture of simple but real happiness.

Such is the condition of the laboring class, that is, the mass of the people, wherever the state of civilization is such, that the mass of the people are generally industrious and temperate. The more deserving part of them, that is, those who are somewhat more active, industrious, and provident than the rest, realize a regular profit from their labor, and gradually accumulate a moderate capital. We have all read the history of the Forty Thieves, in which the uttering of the magical word *sesame* is supposed to open a passage through a solid rock. The cheerful sounds of *profits and accumulated capital* produce an effect less marvellous, but far more pleasant on the laborer's condition. A troop of minor comforts and humble luxuries gather round him and his family at the very mention of the names,—the decent holiday apparel, the Sunday's board

crowned with rural dainties, education for his children, and a gradual improvement of his own circumstances; until, after beginning as a common workman, he finishes, perhaps, as a justice of the peace; holds his own court of a week day; sits on Sunday with a proud satisfaction, only chastened by the reverence due to the place, under the pastoral instructions of his son, proclaiming the word of life from the pulpit; beholds his daughters forming well assorted marriages with the neighboring youth; and finds himself at last the patriarch of a numerous group of children, grandchildren, and family connexions, which rise up around him, calling and making him blessed.

The condition of the mass of the people is not therefore abject and wretched, by the necessary operation of the standing laws of nature; but depends on the agency of two principal circumstances; the state of civilization, and in each particular case the character of the individual. Accordingly as the habits of the individual rise above or fall below the standard of morals established around him, he will be either prosperous or unhappy, as compared with his neighbors and countrymen. Thus far everything depends upon himself; but no personal superiority over those about him will place him on a level with men, whose characters are formed upon a higher model. A respectable Hottentot is a being quite inferior to a common European or American. Much, therefore, depends upon the circumstances under which the individual character is formed, and in this particular a man can do but little for himself. If he have enjoyed the benefit of a social position favorable to happiness and virtue, he should regard and be grateful for it as a blessing of Providence.

But though the individual can in general do but little in raising himself above the standard of civilization, upon which his character is formed, the standard may itself be elevated by the efforts of powerful minds, whose talents and advantages enable them to exercise an extensive influence over the opinions and fortunes of others. By diffusing the knowledge of truth, by correcting errors, and reforming their practical results, by laboring to improve the great institutions of religion and government, which rule with imperial and almost unbounded sway the characters of men, by perfecting the modes of education, and finally by holding up the high example of a pure, disinterested, and honorable life, they may very much meliorate the circumstances under which the individual characters of their

countrymen are formed, and bequeath a permanent legacy of virtue and happiness to future generations. The philosophy of the new economical school teaches us, that such expectations are idle and visionary ; and that no improvements in religion, education, or government can effect any favorable change in the condition of the mass of mankind, who, according to them, are everywhere condemned by the standing laws of nature to a state of abject wretchedness. Without going quite so far as the illustrious Roman orator, who declared that he would rather be in the wrong with Plato than in the right with Epicurus, we cannot but feel a strong satisfaction in finding what we think good grounds for rejecting this gloomy, though at present popular system ; and shall be happy, if we have been able to communicate to the minds of our readers the convictions of our own.

It is time, however, to bring these remarks to a close. Although we have extended them to the full limits of a long article, it has not been in our power to do more than indicate, very briefly and rapidly, the leading errors of the system we have been considering, and the more correct principles which we have ventured to propose in their place. We must leave it to the intelligence of our readers to follow out these principles into their conclusions. They will be found to modify more or less, in almost all its parts, the science of political economy, as now understood and taught in England ; and to give it a more agreeable and satisfactory aspect than it wears at present. In treating at times with levity, and occasionally with some degree of harshness, the prevailing doctrines, we have no intention, as we have already declared, of attacking the motives or depreciating the characters of their adherents. We believe the system to be not only erroneous, but in a high degree antisocial, and of course immoral ; but the experience of the world has shown, that opinions of this description may be held and promulgated by very good and able men.

Mr M'Culloch, whose work is immediately before us, has personally but little to answer for as respects the merits of the system, as he belongs in substance to the class of commentators and compilers. Mr Malthus is the chief authority with this whole school, which was also sustained in the British Parliament and in his writings by the late Mr Ricardo, and to which Mr Brougham has given his personal sanction, and probably that of the *Edinburgh Review*. All these gentlemen are among the

most intelligent and philanthropic men of the age, and their imposing names would almost necessarily give a temporary currency to any opinion. The unsettled state of the public mind in England, upon all the main points of moral and political philosophy, and the questionable character of the theories most generally received respecting them, are also among the causes that have contributed to favor the circulation of these repulsive paradoxes. Society reposes, one might almost say, *ex vi termini*, upon the basis of the social instincts and affections, and no system of moral science could ever gain a complete ascendancy in any civilized community, that did not acknowledge their reality and importance. Wherever, therefore, the public opinion on these subjects was completely formed, no theory of any branch of political philosophy, which, like the one in question, should proscribe the social affections, and declare them to be merely pernicious illusions, would have any chance of success. But the nations of Europe have been so much distracted, for centuries past, by a series of revolutions and antirevolutions in government, most of them immediately connected with the state of public opinion on the leading principles of morals, and in turn producing a reaction upon it, that this most important branch of science has never yet acquired among them a consistent and settled shape.

The doctrines now most popular, especially in England, are by a strange kind of fatality, those which fairly invert the social pyramid, and place it upright upon its apex, by founding society precisely on the antisocial principle, improperly called *self love*. Such opinions, however improbable in themselves, tend, if once admitted, to facilitate the adoption of any theory that depreciates the value of the social affections. We may reasonably expect, that the current notions on these subjects will in time give place to others of a sounder and loftier cast, but we rather doubt whether we ought to look for such a reformation to the mother country; where all the literary and philosophical pursuits, that rise at all above the level of the business and amusement of daily life, seem to have fallen into a state of hopeless decrepitude. It is in this our young and flourishing republic, if we are not too much deceived by our own partialities, and what we think the signs of the times, that we shall behold, and that at no very distant period, a restoration of the true social philosophy, and shall see, perhaps for the first time in the history of man, the great science of morals assume a fixed and

stable form. Our political institutions favor in every way the developement of the best and noblest sentiments, and our prosperous national position, prospective and present, naturally leads us to regard the destiny and fortunes of man on the bright side.

Whenever this reform or anything like it shall happen, the antisocial paradoxes we have now been considering will fall of themselves, as worthless appendages of exploded and degrading heresies. We observe, already, the stirrings of a spirit, which seems to prognosticate this new order of things. The strains of pure and sweet poetry, that rise upon the public sense, like 'a cloud of rich distilled perfumes,' in the unaffected freshness of nature on every side; the copious vein of elegant literature, far more precious than our new found mines of gold, that has been opened in our native mountains, under the shade of our antique forests, and is now wrought with such brilliant success, the recent awakening of the patriotic fervor of '76, which has burst upon the nation in a glorious flood of eloquence unmingled, for the first time, with the bitterness of party spirit, and unsurpassed, whether for the elevation of the matter, or the classical perfection of the form, by the highest efforts of any age or country; these, we say, are the splendid signs of the times, that forebode the era of a sounder and more generous moral philosophy, than the heartless system that now prevails in England.

ART. VII.—1. *Message of the President of the United States, transmitting Copies of the several Instructions to the Ministers of the United States to the Government of France, and of the Correspondence with said Government, having Reference to the Spoliations committed by that Power, on the Commerce of the United States, anterior to September 30th, 1800, &c. In compliance with a Resolution of the Senate. May 20th, 1826.*

2. *A Sketch of the Claims of sundry American Citizens on the Government of the United States for Indemnity for Depredations committed on their Property by the French (prior to the 30th of September, 1800), which were ac-*